

The Joy and the Cry of the Universe

Poems by

WILMA RAY COLE

In tune with nature and in touch with the world conditions that threaten it, the poet writes outspokenly about both.

Traveling, mostly in the South, has become a pleasant pastime for her, and each venture is an experience for comparison and discovery. And her journeys are discussed here. But Mrs. Cole also often dips back into her past and gently recalls the desperation of the '30s, the joy of her youth, the tenderness of family love and the haunting sorrow of the loss of dear ones. The strongest persisting force under all these emotions is the poet's grasp of the flux of nature. Here is one of the poems that reflects this force; it is called "Elements of Fog":

On this, a Thursday, morn
The trees, more barren
Of the leaves
Than before,
Reflect the changing season
That blessed their boughs
Now blanketed by fog
Of the once clear air.

From the thicket
Come the notes
Of birds with many songs,
Elements of the weather

(continued on back flap)

The Joy and the Cry of the Universe



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The Joy and the Cry of the Universe

Poems by
Wilma Ray Cole



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To my beloved family and friends
for their love and understanding

In loving memory of my parents and sisters, June and Zilphie

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Tulsa to Memphis

I view the shadows
 On the earth,
As seen so far below.
 We are in the clouds.
Turbulence fills the air,
 As the lightning flashes warning
To the bird of the sky.
 The clouds fly swiftly by.
We leave them far behind.

Winding rivers; winding streams
 Seen from afar,
Under the mist
 Of the great sea clouds.
Over the valleys,
 Over the streams, we fly.
Much turbulence fills the air.
 Man's highways of life
Are seen so far below.
 All things appear in miniature
From so far above.
 Mounds of earth of the great plains
Are visible from the window
 Of our plane.
The land of the plains' Indians
 Of Oklahoma.

Allow me to view this great scene
 As our wings leave the earth.
We are airborne into the Heavens.
 Again, I view the rising mounds
Of where the Ancients lie.
 And see the shadows

Cast on the earth

From so high up in the sky.

There are clouds surrounding us,

As we rock to and fro.

I see them floating far below.

They appear as great puffs of smoke

Floating o'er an angry sea.

Oh, how beautiful are the Heavens;

But how angry is the sky!

As I watch the cloud formations

Whirling by.

Turbulence

Fills the air

As we rock

To and fro.

I have no fear,

I feel so close to God.

Now we are a miniature shadow

On the earth,

When we break through the clouds.

Much turbulence fills the air

As we fly.

Clouds, dark and threatening,

Pierce the sky.

Into Ft. Smith, we touch down.

Blue misted mountains

Rise in the distance,

And are seen as we touch the earth.

The shadow of our plane

Appears as a child's

Miniature toy

Reflected on the earth below.

The sky is filled with thunderheads

That roll across the blue.
A great sea of clouds floats by.
The clouds appear as fluff
That floats in the atmosphere.
Air currents abound in the air.
I view the layers of clouds below.
The clouds appear as a great feather bed
Over which I may walk,
On which I may lie,
On which I may float
In the fluff.

I see the aerial map
Of the earth far down below.
It is with humble awe
I view the scene,
Obscured by the clouds.
The clouds rise upward
Like great fluffed animals of snow.
I see the rivers:
I see the lakes:
But there are no seas,
I see only the sea clouds.

We are homeward bound,
As we airlift to the sky.
Again, I view the earth below
And behold the Mississippi River,
Father of Waters, which feeds the land.
We fly over the great bridge span,
Built by the architects of man.
I arrive at my destination . . .
In the city of Memphis.

Withered Boards

Remembering, now I see

 The house with "withered boards."

Sad and lonely, it stands,

 Among the trees

Away from the road.

 An old car that barely runs

Sits in the drive.

 A scattered flock of fowl

Wander round.

 Garments, ragged and worn,

Hang on the line.

 A shadowy form

Peers through the door,

 To breathe of the air.

Little Children wander 'round,

 Barely more than inches high,

In the shadows of the trees.

We are neighbors

 Yet we know

Not the anguish that lives inside

 The house with withered boards.

Until a knocking at our door

 When the sun is high.

A child with frightened eyes . . . waits at the door,

 "Come, my father pleads,

 My Mother sleeps in the house

 next door."

I hurry with the lad

 To the house with withered boards

And there, I see a father weep

 Ere I enter the door.

 "This morn she plucked a fowl

To feed her family four
And then lie down
To rise no more."
The father barely seems to know
I am there.

A strange car pulls in the drive.
A man with a gun carried aside
Comes to the door.

On his coat a badge, he wears,
Come, to arrest this man
For stealing the fowl
"One she plucked that day"
To feed her family, four.

Seeing the man and his orphaned ones,
And the Mother whom death had claimed,
Learns of the tragedy, that day
In the house with withered boards.
Not a calloused man, is he,
He leaves to go for aid,
And awaken the town
To the tragedy in the house next door.

In memory, I will always see
The house with withered boards,
And ne'er forget, the Great Depression Years.

*I was eleven years old when
the events described occurred.
It was "My Mother" who went
with the lad next door.*

Sand Girl

To Barbara Sue, my Granddaughter

My little Sand Girl
 Is only five,
And what a carefree age
 To be alive.
In the morn
 She looks so clean;
Her skin scrubbed
 Like shiny new.
At night she is
 My little Sand Girl,
All smudged and the color
 Of golden sand.
What a merry spot she found
 In the middle
Of an untraveled bed,
 To build her castles in the sand.
Every child has a dream and a plan
 And is an architect at heart.
So let her dream today
 And build for tomorrow
When she is four times five.

Donna and the Rocks

(Chickasaw Park—Age 10)

What a place to be
 For a little girl like me
See all these rocks
 That I have found?
My collection they will be.

I have sisters, three,
 Who looked for rocks
Just like me
 But there can only be
“Two” each for just we three.

We found all treasures free
 In this Park with rocks and trees
Where campfires burn at night
 And insects sing the forest songs.

I pour my treasures
 On the earth.
Now I must decide
 The “two” for me
There are many things to see
 In these rocks
The Park gave me.

I look at my rocks anew
 And there I see,
A beautiful bee
 That could have flit
From tree to tree.
 This rock is an eagle

I know for I can see;
He is looking straight at me.

To leave my treasures
So far behind
For someone else to find
Saddens me.
Someone! Please persuade
My dad.

The Hurricane

(Word Imagery) and (Sound) (Dramatic)

Fast moving clouds, trees swaying to the earth
in the angered elements of Nature's rage.

Hurricane Carla!

Buildings, the structures of man appear small and
insignificant against the fury of the storm.

In the Gulf Water, the ships thrash about in the
angry, torturous sea.

Some anchored, some secured—will they withstand
the mighty gale of the storm?

Animals, farm animals, abiding in a field come within
the radius of the madness of the Nature's erring child.

The lone animal moves restlessly about, frightened by
the threshing, angry waves.

Forgotten by man in the wild wake of the storm.

And then . . . as in a dream . . . the violence
is no more.

Nature is calm.

Man begins to claim his own and build anew.

Just Traveling

Along the highway in Indiana,

I saw the highway
Closed in by a hazy mist
So early in the morn.

I saw the wall of rocks
That weep,

Fed by the springs,
So far above.

I saw the heights
Of highways,
That intercourse the town.

Plans of old cities,
Laid out so long ago.
Highways moving traffic,
At a rapid pace.

We cross the John F. Kennedy Bridge
That spans the Ohio River
Into the Blue Grass state.

Destination unknown,
Just traveling along
To see the countryside.

We pass through a tunnel
Cut under the mountain high.

A smaller stream of water,
Traverses the land.
We cross over the stream span.

The haze has now lifted
And we hurry on our way
To somewhere . . .
Before the close of day.

Kentucky Travel

In Kentucky, I see

No weeping of the rocks.

Only the walls of stone

Along the highway of man.

Tree-covered mountains

Lie before me,

Known as the Appalachian range, by name.

Now we pass a wall of rocks

That weeps springs.

Peculiar colored rocks emerge

The like I have not seen.

The surface of the rocks

Speaks of a Kentucky coal vein.

There are faces pitted in the rocks,

Faces made of stone.

And from the rocks rise

The image of a "pinkened palace";

Fit for a noble king.

This is America!

A land discovered centuries ago,

A land of beauty, grace and lore,

For those who love it by the score.

West Virginia Travel

Mighty mountains lie before me
 Rising to the sky,
Covered with the green of foliage
 Cooled by a summer's rain.
Great huge rocks
 With mountain faces
Rise high above the road.
 Some have broken from their moorings,
Spawned by man's machines.
 Some are red and many colored,
Some are smutted from the coal
 Coursing through their veins,
Of the rising mountainside.
 Scenic are the mountains:
Wild is the countryside:
 Misted and rugged
Are the mountains
 That we must cross over,
To reach the other side.
 Shale rocks in massive layers
Rise beside the road.
Settlements, towns and cities
 Are scattered and far apart.
Now in the valley
 We drop down.
Now we reach the sloping mounds,
 Only to ascend again
Up the mountainside.
 Crooked is the road:
Crooked are the streams
 That feed from the mountains
To course through the land
 And nourish the wide industry

Which feeds from the mountain wealth,
For those who share the bounty
Of the mountains of West Virginia.

West Virginia was my father's birthstate,
Known only to me
Through the images of my father's words
Unknown, by sight, to me
Until my journey through this land.

Nantahala Gorge

(North Carolina)

Nantahala Gorge—huge boulders
Rise in the rushing water
Of the mountain stream.
We are closed in
By the huge mountain
Clothed in wilderness
And forest trees of green,
From the coldness
Of the water rises steam.
From the heights of the mountains,
The clouds float in as fog,
To obscure the mountain ridge.
It is a wondrous scene
For the eyes of man to behold.

And now the river widens;
The water can scarcely be seen

For the steam.

As we travel,
We watch the river narrow
And gush furiously at the gorge.
A lone fisherman
Casts his line
And glories in the gushing of the water.

Crisp and cool is the air
And so clean.
Water rolling, boiling, rushing
From the mountain slope.
Springs oozing from the mountain wall,
A beauteous sight
That ne'er is mine to behold.
People seem to feel a reverence
And wish to keep the forests green
And the water pure.
This appears to be an act
That serves to keep our faith
In God, through Nature.

North Carolina

Roaring streams and rippling water
 Flowing through the mountain valleys,
Forests, deep, clothe the mountains, green,
 To provide a Paradise
For the forest life, unseen.

We are travelers in this land
 Of North Carolina,
Only passing through.
 We leave it far behind
To wind our endless way
 Down the mountain road,
Pulling our camper
 And its heavy load.

We cross the Tennessee River.
 We marvel at the quiet, peaceful stream
Stirred only now and then
 By the waterlife, unseen.
No pollution scars the river.
 What a beautiful scene!
How refreshing to the traveler
 Sickened by man's thoughtless ways,
In his desire for wealth,
 At the sacrifice of the land and streams.

Tennessee Travel

We enter Tennessee,
And are sickened at the unsightly scene
Of those who care not
For the gifts bestowed
By God on man.
The lack of pride,
The lack of care,
Is evidenced along the way.

Rubbish, beer cans, flying paper, debris . . .
Mar the beauty of what we see.
We compare our home and state
To states we journeyed through.
We are ashamed
That our state has lagged
So far behind
With cleanliness and pride.

Let us each see our state
With the eyes of the traveler
Who lingers not and hurries
On his way.
May we strive
To make Tennessee a "state of pride."

Only we, the citizens, can restore
The pride that is forgotten.
Let us do our share
And a little more,
For those who see not and care not
For the state of Tennessee.

The Dream

The dream, it comes and goes,
Ere I go to bed.

These dreams that taunt
Me through the night.

I sleep, and dream
That she has come to me,
Oh dream of mine.
I saw her standing there,
So near my bed.
I touched her face.
I touched her brow,
And heard her call my name.
A little while, she stayed with me,
Oh Guardian of my Soul.

I am awakened from a dream—
A dream of how she died—
A dream that comes and goes
Throughout the live-lone night.
Oh, that I can sleep . . .
And dream no more.

Oh, I must go
To the lake, said she,
For there I make my bed.
Oh God, I humbly beg of thee
Remove this curse from my head!
But the agony lingers on,
Of the debt that he must pay
To our God . . .
To recompense his Soul.

Courage in Question

Death is inevitable.

It is an easy escape from life.
To live requires more courage of man
Than to die.

We could all view our lives
As "one big disappointment."

We must learn to accept life
At the "face value" it offers.

Life was a gift
Given to us by Almighty God.

We come into this world
Asking, but not giving.

Our first moment and hours
Of life are "a pleading."

Give unto me the breath of life,
Give unto me food;

That I may breathe and nourish my body.

For this gift, what have we given
The "giver" in return?

Each of us should take an accounting
Of thyself

For the gift
Without recompense
Is all for naught.

Do we have the courage to live?

Henrietta

Henrietta, our golden fish,
 We found her at the lakeside shore,
When we were camping
 In the park one day,
My sister and I.

 We carefully put her in a jar
And hurried to our Papa.
 He put her in a deep-sized pan,
So she could live
 And swim again.

We took her home
 To meet our sisters,
Our beautiful, golden fish.
 We fed her food
And water, too,
 To show how much we cared.
A tiny, golden fish we bought
 To keep her company.

One night, we went to sleep
 And awakened with the day,
To find our Henrietta
 Could swim no more.
We were so sad and we grieved so.
 We carried her to our big oak tree
And buried her so tenderly
 With moss and leaves;
Our Henrietta.

One day
 Mother took us to the Grotto,
Where we saw our golden fish.
 She was so beautiful,

There, in the pool of running water.

We begged our Mother,

We could not leave her

She said, "The Angel found this home,
And she must stay and we must go."

My little sister said to our Mother,
"I stay in the pool with her."

My Mother kindly said to her,
"This is Heaven, Barbie,

And she is happy in the
Pool of water;

But you can visit her
Here at the Grotto."

We sisters left but Barbie lingered

To bid farewell to Henrietta,
With a child's promise

She made to keep,
"I' come back to see you."

Heaven's Pool

*Barbara Sue, age 5, returns to visit her golden fish that went
away to Heaven.*

I looked in the pool
 And there I saw
My Henrietta
 So happy in the pool
Of running water;
 With all the tiny kin
Who swim in a school, after . . .

My beautiful, golden fish
 I have come to see you,
Here at the Grotto.
 I miss you so;
But I am bigger
 Now, you know,
And this is home
 In Heaven's Pool
Here at the Grotto.

Infinite Beauty

A tribute to a minute flower
That grows beside the way
A flower with lilac petals soft
Bathed in morning dew.
Your stem and blades are emerald green;
Lined with veins of cactus thread,
To hold you safe
Against a rocky, craggy ledge.

No green meadow
Is required for you;
A fragile flower
Of purest hue;
A flower unique
With beauty too;
Unique in a small
And beautiful way;
Blessed with "infinite beauty"
All your own.

Alone

A woman, ancient
With the years
And hair like ashes
On the hearth,
Dwells alone
In a tumbledown shack,
A place she knows as home.

Life has passed
Through her trembling hands
Like a strong wind
That shapes the fallen leaves
As windrows on the ground.

Her joys of life
Are now at rest
And left her all alone.
She waits at the end of day
For God to take her home.

Elements of Fog

On this, a Thursday, morn
The trees, more barren
Of the leaves
Than before,
Reflect the changing season
That blessed their boughs
Now blanketed by fog
Of the once clear air.

From the thicket
Comes the notes
Of birds with many songs,
Elements of the weather
Affect thee not.
I hear the song, somewhere,
But I see thee not.
A song you sing of hope,
Your song of love,
A sweet refrain
For the weary Universe
Plagued by many ills.

Motorists hid by a cloak of steel
Move slowly on the streets
As a mirage of forms,
Now piercing the dense air;
With the motor's roar,
Heard more clearly than before,
As sound is carried to my ear,
Long before the sight
Can discern the fog
Covering the city
In darkness . . . like a cloud.

Big birds of the air
Grounded safely on the ground,
Until the blanket lifts
Or falls to the earth below.

Indian Summer's in the air
At midday.
The trees dressed in Fall array,
More beautiful than before,
Mysterious in their misted glow
Awaken thee to look, to listen,
As one member
Of the Universe.

Lady Love

The lady of the Sea
Once given by God to me
Walks by the sea at night.
I see her in a gown of white,
Of lace and flowing pleats so light,
Shimmering in the soft moonlight
Near the water's edge.

My Lady Love

My Lady Fair

Ascended to God
In the cool night air.

I go to the Sea
To meet her there,
My Lady Fair
Of the Sea.
I hear her whisper on the waves
As I wait by the Sea.
 My Lady Love
 My Lady Fair.

I abide by the Sea
Till the night is gone
And then turn home
To dream alone
Of my Lady Fair . . .
Who waits for me
Beyond the wall
Of the sea of life.

 My Lady Love
 My Lady Fair
I now go home
To meet thee there
In the land beyond the sea,
Beyond the wall of life.

In the Garden

In memory of "someone" who shared my life

The grass is faded
In the Park
Where I sleep.
The flowers withered
From the rain.
The rows of Cedars
Rock slowly in the wind
That stirs their branches, again.
Leaves of the Oak
Are browned and fallen
To the ground,
Or cast aloft by the wind.
Deep tragedy prevailed
O'er the life of me.

Alone, Alone, Alone!

I sleep,

Until awakened from my dream
At Eternity's end.

My life was blessed with love.
Gentle as the Peace of a Turtledove,
Gentle as the rain that falls from above,
Gentle as the wind
That blows from the Sea of Love.

My life was shattered
By deceit and sin
And now I sleep
In the garden, within.

Alone, Alone, Alone!

Until my God awakens me.

Nature's Plan

When the sun of day
Has set to rest
The sky reflects its Blessedness.
The air is filled
With the locust's cry,
As the night
O'ercomes the dusk.

A bank of clouds
Now rises high
In the West;
The birds have flown
Home to nest.
A soft breeze
Stirs the evening air,
As mountains tower the sky.

Peace reigns from on high
Throughout the earth.
Nature is filled with awesomeness;
As forms of God and man
Silhouette in Nature's plan.

Jack Frost

Jack Frost paid a visit today.
He painted the fields
With frosted hay.
More barren are the tree boughs
Than the day before.
The leaves painted from the palette bright
Now glow against the frost so white
In the chill, cold air.

The sun spreads
Its golden glow
Across the sky,
Before its rise at dawn
On this an early morn.

Peace

The pale moon
Casts its beams upon the water
In the night at peace with Nature.
The world lies sleeping in a dream
Within the essence of the sound
Of the waves breaking on the shore.
The waves breathe into the night
Their ancient metaphor.

In Memory

Her birthday was in the Fall,
A Blessed day, I do recall.
Now my name, she does not call;
She has gone to dwell with God.

May the leaves
Of the forest
Turn gold this Fall
As the jewels of the crown she wears
On this . . . her birthday.
I long to be drawn nigh to her.
When my Lord doth call
And feel her saintly, radiant glow,
My Dearest Sister
Whom I loved so.

Leaves

The leaves turned by the wind
Are silvered in the sun.
Each patterned leaf
A song unsung.
Each leaf delicate and defined;
Each color becomes its own.
Each form of Nature . . . a minute part
Of the Universe.

The Shadow

Now the shadow
Spreads before me,
And I bow my weary head.
The shadow will now lengthen
Before I go to bed.
I may ne'er awaken
With the morning.
I will ne'er awaken
With the day.
For I have gone
To do God's bidding,
And I hurry on my way.

White Bird

Oh, my God,
I am so alone tonight!
I dreamed she was by my side;
I awakened to find her gone,
Fled into the night.
The strange, white bird
That hovered near my door,
Had fled with her into the night.

Birth

The death of the Season
Born of the Spring
Now succumbs to the Fall.
The Autumn sky . . . cooled
By the northern flow
Of the winds
Is clothed in a cloak of gray.

Though it be early morn,
The sun sleeps still, with the night
In the dark of the cold gray day.
Traffic on the city street
Moves with a rhythmic beat.
Of the rustic leaves
That rustle 'round the old oak trunk
Of the tree.
Leaves come fluttering down
To lie on the ground
Or move restlessly about
In the blow of the wind.

Nature awaits the Artist of the Fall
To paint her forests green, aglow
Before the long winter's night
When nature sleeps.
The trees stare barren at the sky
With limbs of ice, laden with snow,
Awaiting the birth of Spring.

The Plan

How beautiful are the oceans,
How beautiful are the seas,
How beautiful is the land
Where dwelt you and me.

The mountains and the ridges
Now rise for me to see;
I marvel at their beauty
Designed for you and me.
Respect the humble beauty,
Respect the master's hand,
The creator of this beauty,
And the master plan.

Ghosts of '72

Here they come . . .
There they go . . .
Spooks a-prowlin' in the streets
Big and rough and tough to meet
Those ghostly ghosts
Of the road,
On this dark October night.

Witches, cats and Goblins, too
Dressed in sheets and costumes new;
Calling at each door
 "Trick or Treat!"

Tiny ghosts, giant ghosts
And ghosts galore
Just prowlin' round the town
Feeling not the rain nor snow;
With sacks and bags or pumpkin heads . . .
 "Trick or Treat!"

"Thanks," call they
Departing down the walk or way
Calling to the folks next door,
 "Trick or Treat!"

The small ones' treats
Are piling high,
Legs are growing weary,
Eyelids growing heavy,
Longing to eat
The treats they're carrying home;
These ghostly ghosts of '72
Soon to fade into the night.

Food of Life

The December air
Frozen from the Arctic region,
Floated in with a drenching rain
To chill the city.
Elements of the earth
Appear as a frozen wash
Upon the line,
Cold and still is the landscape,
On this long and dreary morn.

The tree boughs
Are patterned like a spider's lacy web,
So still, so silent, so asleep
Against a sea of gray, snow clouds;
The trees, rocked by the wind,
Are overcome by the winter's storm.

The rains of winter have come
And turned the grass to gray.
Small birds huddle all around
To ward off the cold and rain.
The Chickadee and Robin
Chose to stay.
They seek food
Tossed on the ground
A trust established between man and fowl
In sharing the "food of life."

The Orphans

We are the orphans of the streets,
We are the victims of a war:
The children of Vietnam.
We have no one to guide our steps,
No one to care at all;
Born for naught and a day;
We had no choice at all.
Our fathers were soldiers
Gone to war . . .
Our mothers slain at dawn,
And now we wander aimlessly
On and on and on . . .

Our eyes are dull with long defeat;
With hunger pangs, we grow.
We ate the garbage from the cans,
But not enough for all.
We are the orphans of the streets
Who wander aimlessly, on and on and on . . .

We are cold and wet
From the night's long rain;
Without future, without plan.
We have no dreams at all.
We wander aimlessly
On and on and on . . .

To a girl I loved

I awakened as a babe
On the day that I was born.
The whole world was singing
My own gracious song:
And now my world is ending
Before it ere begun.

My song . . . my song,
I cannot hear my song;
My life is filled with woe.
The flowers fade and wither away
As cut by the winter's scythe,
Where'er I go.

A cloud hangs o'er my world,
Like a dismal moon;
And now my world is ending
Before my song is sung.

What has happened to my world . . .
What has happened to my song . . .
Where'er can I be?

My friends gather round
My world of lights
Will shine no more for me
Oh God, forgive me,
If I was wrong.

Snow in Dixie

To my son, James

In the night the snow
Began to fall,
The temperature dropped
To a new low.
We awakened from the night
To see a landscape
In the snow.

Snowflakes fall
As great snowballs.
A sight to cheer the loneliest child.
From the loft
Will come the sled
To slide the slopes
With sheer delight.
The sled, a gift to them
From a man
Who was once a child.

He has come to see
The children in the snow;
To see their jolly faces glow,
And hear their laughter ring;
To join their laughter
And their glee
For a child at heart, is he;
In a land of snow
So rare in Dixie.

A Gracious Tree

Oh that I could be
A gracious tree,
Graced in a summer's dress
For all the world to see.
I would provide a place of rest,
For you and me.

A sturdy arm, I would extend,
For the child to swing and wend;
To see the world both near and far.
Oh, that I could provide
A nest of privacy,
For the robin and their brood;
A nest for the squirrel
On my highest, strongest limb,
Built of twigs and leaves
Gathered from the wood.
Joy, I would be
For the creatures and their kin.

In the Fall, I'd change my dress
For a scarlet, crimson hue,
To attend the fashion show
Of the wood.
My leaves, they will fall
To provide a carpet soft
In the wood.

When my limbs are barren, still,
And the winds are blowing shrill
I would fall asleep
With the snows that drift
Upon my boughs.

The Sacrifice

To my Mother on her birthday

Many flowers were cut today
Left on the fields of war,
To wither and decay,
On the battlefields of Vietnam
Ten thousand miles away.

Why must we fight
These needless wars,
When humanity bleeds in vain,
And Peace eludes us . . .
Like children in a Hide-and-Seek game?

We search for "tomorrow"
For a Peace to end all wars
While the wealth of our land
Shrinks and dwindles away,
And brave men die on foreign soils.
Political anarchy is king
Within our land.
Internal illness consumes
The will and minds of man.
Words and efforts fall
In hollow dells.

We await a miracle, yet unborn,
And flounder as a child
Within a womb;
Aborted we may become.

Values and virtues
We must proclaim,
Ere the sacrifice
Be in vain.

Price of Peace

The war is winding down, they say,
A few more battles to be won,
Then I'll be going home.
A soldier brave
I've tried to be,
To serve my country and my God,
And keep my country free.
My homeland waits for me
Beyond the China Sea.
A few more battles to be won,
Then I'll be going home.

The enemy struck at dawn
And felled him by its hand.
He dreamed a dream of going home
Before that last long stand.
His body rests on foreign soil,
His spirit fled on high.

My soldier is not coming home;
He was felled at dawn.
I dreamed a dream . . .
And saw him man the gun.
Many lives have paid
The price for Peace.
"My soldier is not coming home."

Signs of Spring

Signs of Spring appear today
As the earth awakens from a dream
And winter is o'er.
The yellow crocus bursts forth in bloom
As the day awakens
The lonely Spirit is cheered
After a long cruel winter.

The mockingbirds
Made love today,
A song and a dance, performed they
In the warm sunshine.
Soon a nest
We will find
In a chosen tree
Happy notes of welcome
For you and me,
Who share Nature's Blessing.

Twilight Years

To my husband

It was only a dream,
A dream, we dreamed for a day;
A beautiful dream
But lonely too,
Of long nights and twilight years
A dream we reaped from life,
Of the most that we have sowed,
In the days that still remain
For you and I, my love.

Once, we were young,
Once, we were gay,
With dreams of life,
Some went astray.
Now we search
For the end of the rainbow—
A rainbow that has not gold,
A rainbow of life, immortal,
More precious than a rich man's gold.

Spring's Birth

I saw the iris blooming
In the Spring.
I heard the children's laughter ring
I saw the trees
Burst forth with buds.
This is the Birth of Spring.

Spring showers
Come our way,
To make new springs,
And rivers flow,
And give new life
To each living thing
Within the Universe of God.

In the Spring
Life abounds on every side.
Overnight the grass turned green
And the north winds
Ceased to howl.
Winter sleeps with the night,
With the birth of Spring.

Birth of Spring

Spring has come again, this year
In the flowers and the trees,
In the birds that sing
Their sweet lullabys.
Spring is seen in the faces of the young,
A sign of hope
To all who labor in the vineyards
Of our King.

It was in the Spring of seventy-one
She went away.
The flowers once planted by her hand
Now withered in the rain.
My memories are lonely
As my love.

I feel not the touch of her hand
That soothed my brow,
And shared my life,
In the sun and the rain.
My eyes, rain as showers
That fall on a troubled ground.

I must not yield
My life to grief;
For "all around me"
The New Birth reigns.
God blesses each lonely child
With the Birth of Spring.

The Old Man

I am like a child without a home
Now that I am old and alone.
There is no place for me
But in the setting sun.
My day is done:
I would turn home,
If a call came for me.
My wisdom is outdated,
My time belonged to yesterday,
No one needs the thoughts and memories
Of an old man.
My lights have long burned low;
My God . . . come for me,
Take me home . . . where I belong.

My steps are slow and feeble with time.
I have not money;
I have not gold;
But a life of hard work,
And honesty told.
Gifts, I gave to my fellowman;
Gifts of love
Blessed by the Savior's hand.
Take me home . . .
Away from the quickening sands.

The Tragedy

We come to the garden
In the Spring
Flowers of loveliness, we bring
For your bed of eternal dreams
Washed by torrents of rain,
Greened by warm winds of Spring.

For you, our thoughts ere turn
Remembering the sunlight
Of your soul
Mournfully we recall
How tragedy befell
And winter's cold, cruel winds
O'ercame life's dream.

Little children loved, beguiled,
Turned to apathy
Motherless, they became
Loveless, lost to all.

Dreams of Dust

The American dream lies tarnished
In the dust
Ill, afraid and lonely-ran,
Angry and trapped
In the mire.
Age proven institutions
Crumble and fall,
Seething and boiling in reign
Freedom? Mockery and pain
A cancerous growth o'ercame
The "will and soul" of man.

Crime reigns and terror roams
In our cities,
Mugged, robbed and slain
A life given in vain
Adjudged insane
The beast devours the prey
Freed to maim again.

Floods of '73

Man scans the sky
With fear and foreboding,
As the rains continue today
To fall on the crying ground.
Angered waves punish
The earth and man
With renewed fury,
As the rains pour down.
Man and earth
Cry out as one,
"What have I done
To deserve such punishment?"

The Heavens weep
For the sin-rent earth.
Weeping clouds echo in distress.
The brooks long filled to o'erflowing
Have become rivers,
And the rivers become seas
They cleanse the land, fitfully.
The land is filled with sadness
As towns sweep out to sea.

The winds, great havoc reign
On man and every living thing.
The sun comes out to shine
Then hides behind the clouds, in fear.
Minute areas of dried land
Arise like great dust clouds
And bring dusk to the day.
Fearful is man

Of Nature's relentless release,
Of Nature's violence.

Man must face his inevitable destiny:
There is a power much greater than he,
He cannot control.
When man becomes overpretentious
He is struck down
As a blade of grass
In the winter's freeze.

I cry out to the Heavens,
"Why can God not seek out one
To rent his anger on? I am
not guilty of mocking thee."
Now, I remember
The Cross of Calvary.

The Quest

My life is like a darkened sky
Drenching rain as the clouds float by.
Somewhere in the sky above
Is a rainbow and a dream of love.
Exquisite beauty I shall behold
In time revealed to me,
As one who seeks and finds a quest.

My Little One

Awaken, awaken,
My little one,
The morn has come,
The cock hath crowed
At early dawn,
Sleep not the day,
My little one.

Awaken, awaken,
My little one,
The sun rides high
In the sky
And the day
Has long begun.

Arise, arise, away,
My little one,
But the babe
Slept on and on.

In the night
An angel came
And closed the eyes
Of my little one.

Dreamless sleep
Dreamless child
Dreamless flower of mine
Dreamless life
Eternal sleep
Eternal song
Forever, a flower of God.

Dream, Dream

Dream, dream, dream,
Close your eyes
And dream, dream, dream,
Dream, dream, my little one,
The stars o'erhead
Twinkle in delight,
The old moon laughs
In merriment
A fairyland dream
Will be one.
When the moon and stars
Hide in the sky
Awaken, awaken, my little one.
A whole new world
Has just begun.
It is day.

Sue

Barbara Sue, Age 5

My name is Sue,
 I am my Daddy's pet.
I help my Daddy
 Do things.
We haul the trash and leaves away;
 I talk to him all the way—
I tell him things
 I know
About my sisters
 Who break the rules.
Sometimes, he listens
 To what I say.

I am my Daddy's pet.
 Sometimes, he takes me
On his knee
 And tells me things
He thinks I ought to know
 About how to be good
And what he'll do,
 If I break the rules.

Oh, Mother! Help me with my Dad
 I think I'm gonna be sick;
I am my Daddy's pet,
 "I think."

Friends of Woodrun

Woodrun, Tennessee (Community Development near Memphis)

We have searched
And now we've found
A place we'll know as home;
Where the fireflies light the night,
With lights that twinkle like the stars
Ere the evening sun sets low.
The frogs an instant chorus raise
To entertain the night.
The whippoorwill and bob white call
From the pine trees tall
Into the somber night.
Friendly folks live all around
And greet the stranger
With a welcome now ere found.

The Human Bond

The song of Spring is heard no more
In the house that crests the hill.
An ageless winter has come to stay
For the one who's home is there.

Her skin is crushed
With years of age.
Hair once gold,
Now grayed like sage
Is cast by the wind
Into the air.
Eyes once starlit as the skies,
Casts long shadows
Upon the wall.

To the home of the aged;
To the home of the old;
She has come to dwell
In the lone, blue valley of time
With folks of families,
Now departed or unknown .

Perhaps, someone
Who shares her fate,
Friends of memories,
They will make
In companionship
Of the Human Bond.

(continued from front flap)

Affect thee not.
I hear the song, somewhere,
But I see thee not.
A song you sing of hope,
Your song of love,
A sweet refrain
For the weary Universe
Plagued by many ills.

Motorists hid by a cloak of steel
Move slowly on the streets
As a mirage of forms,
Now piercing the dense air;
With the motor's roar,
Heard more clearly than before,
As sound is carried to my ear,
Long before the sight
Can discern the fog
Covering the city
In darkness . . . like a cloud.

The Joy and the Cry of the Universe will tug at your heart and mind; and will not disappoint the vagabond who longs to settle down with some sentimental verse.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Wilma Ray Cole was born in Ranger, Texas, and moved with her family to a farm in southeast Missouri at an early age. She and her husband have lived in or near Memphis, Tennessee, since 1940, and raised their two children there.

Mrs. Cole has been an art instructor in the Memphis schools since 1957. She is a coauthor of *Teacher's Art Guides*, published by the Memphis Board of Education in 1968. Wilma Cole's art has been exhibited in the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery in Memphis, The Memphis Academy of Arts, and other mid-South exhibitions.

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Advance Praise for *The Joy and the Cry of the Universe*

"The purity, lyric quality, and warmth of emotion found in Mrs. Cole's poetry reduces much of modern poetry to a secondary level by comparison. I feel that many contemporary lovers of poetry are starved for the type of expression found in this writer's work."

Kenneth S. Mays

Administrator, Frayser High School
Memphis, Tennessee

"Mrs. Cole has a Biblical way of expression that shows God's influence in our day to day existence. It is a beautiful way to paint out the more important, simpler things in life."

Doris Heskett, Administrative Secretary for the
Memphis Board of Education, Frayser High School



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